



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING



THOMAS D. WATKINS, JR  
SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

**URGENT MEMORANDUM**

DATE: March 19, 2003

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents  
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Thomas D. Watkins, Jr.

SUBJECT: State Procedures for Schools Related to National Threat Levels

We have been receiving several questions concerning what state procedures will be in place in the event the nation goes to threat level red (severe) due to the imminent war with Iraq. In this time of uncertainty, I am writing to assure you that every precaution is being taken to provide Michigan school districts with information in a timely manner. We are in close communication with the Michigan State Police (MSP) and the Homeland Security Section of the MSP Emergency Management Division.

***School Closing Questions Regarding the Nation Going to Red Alert:***

We have discussed this matter with the Michigan State Police. At this time, there is no credible intelligence information that would warrant that all schools should be closed. In the event that intelligence information is obtained specific to schools in Michigan, you will be notified (see page 2 under Communications).

You are encouraged to communicate directly with your local law enforcement agency on a daily basis to obtain updates on threat level status and other matters of concern regarding school children and school buildings. In addition to contacting your local law enforcement agency, you may choose to call your local Sheriff's Department, Michigan State Police post and your state and local Emergency Management Division (EMD) Coordinator.

If you do not know who your EMD Coordinators are, you can visit the Homeland Security web page at [http://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1593\\_3507-15509--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1593_3507-15509--,00.html). The MSP Homeland Security web page is at [http://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1593\\_3507\\_8920---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1593_3507_8920---,00.html).

For valuable information at the federal level, you may visit the Department of Homeland Security website: - <http://www.dhs.gov>, their new web site <http://www.ready.gov>, or call 1-800-BE-READY, and you'll get printed information once you make that phone call.

For additional clarification, please refer to the School Safety Response Guide that was mailed to all districts in 1999 by the MSP, in cooperation with the Departments of Education and Attorney General, pursuant to MCL 380.1308 (commonly known as 1999 PA 102). The Guide sets forth protocols to be followed in case of emergency.

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***Department of Education Communications with Districts if Threat Level Red is declared:***

If the MSP determines that school districts must be closed for a stated period of time, they will immediately notify the Governor. The Governor will issue the directive to close schools, which the Superintendent of Public Instruction will immediately communicate to school districts.

***Questions Regarding Special Provisions Relative to the Requirements for Days and Hours of School Instruction:***

In the event that the nation goes to a threat level red, and circumstances warrant schools being closed, we will pursue discussion with the Legislature and Executive Office regarding this issue.

Please join us in supporting our brave men and women who are serving and protecting our country, our people, and our system of a free, public education for all citizens.